

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /003 R

66612

DRAFTED BY:AF/S-RJDOLS

APPROVED BY:AF/S:AARENALES

AF-E:WMULCAHY

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TO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

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FOR ASST. SEC. EASUM

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 14002 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO DAR
ES SALAAM, LUSAKA, NAIROBI, CAPE TOWN, CINCUSNAVEUR, USLOSACLANT,
USNMNR SHAPE, USUN NEW YORK, NATO, USCINCEUR DATED 25 OCT 1974:

QTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LONDON 14002

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

NAIROBI FOR HAVERKAMP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SF, UK

SUBJECT: HMG ROW OVER CAPE TOWN PORT CALL

SUMMARY - PUBLIC RELATIONS HANDLING OF CAPE TOWN PORT
CALL HAS ACUTELY EMBARRASSED LABOR GOVERNMENT AND PRO-
DUCED MAJOR ROW IN CABINET. NET RESULT WILL BE IN-
CREASED PRESSURE FOR ABROGATION OF SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT.
END SUMMARY

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1. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACUTELY EMBARRASSED

BY THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE JOINT UK/SOUTH AFRICAN NAVAL EXERCISE JUST CONCLUDED, AND TO THE RELATED PORT CALL AT CAPE TOWN BY A ROYAL NAVY TASK FORCE. FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN IS FURIOUS THAT WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS GOING TO BE A STRICTLY OPERATIONAL VISIT HAS BEEN MADE TO LOOK LIKE A GOODWILL VISIT. FCO SOURCES HAVE HINTED THAT THE COMMANDING BRITISH ADMIRAL EXCEEDED HIS WRIT AND SHOWED POOR POLITICAL JUDGMENT. THEY HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT DEFENCE SECRETARY MASON EXERCISES INSUFFICIENT CONTROL OVER HIS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. CALLAGHAN APOLOGIZED TO MASON AT A CABINET MEETING OCTOBER 24 FOR THESE ALLEGATIONS, BUT FEELINGS BETWEEN THE FCO AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE REMAIN SCRATCHY.

2. LEFT-WING LABOR MPS JOINED BY MANY MODERATES ARE OUTRAGED OVER THE AFFAIR AND ARE PLANNING TO RAISE IT IN THE PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY AND ON THE FLOOR OF THE COMMONS AS SOON AS PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLES NEXT WEEK. PARTLY TO NIP THIS REVOLT IN THE BUD AND PARTLY TO RE-ESTABLISH HIS CREDENTIALS WITH THE BLACK AFRICAN STATES (SEVERAL OF WHICH HE HOPES TO VISIT EARLY IN 1975), CALLAGHAN WILL MAKE A MAJOR POLICY SPEECH IN CARDIFF TONIGHT (OCT. 25), IN WHICH HE IS EXPECTED TO CONDEMN APARTHEID IN STRONGEST LANGUAGE.

3. COMMENT: BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW. VARIOUS INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL FORCES (NOT JUST LEFT-WING) ARE PRESSING FOR ABROGATION OF THE SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT. THEIR ARGUMENTS HAVE BEEN IMMENSURABLY STRENGTHENED BY THE CURRENT FUROR. IF, AS THE BRITISH PRESS ALLEGE, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TURNED A ROUTINE NAVAL VISIT INTO A PROPAGANDA EXERCISE, IT MAY PROVE A COSTLY SHORT-TERM GAIN.

ANNENBERG
UNQTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC RELATIONS, SIMONSTONE AGREEMENT, LABOR UNIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE237534
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RJDOLS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740309-0299
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974109/aaaaahen.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 JUN 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <10 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HMG ROW OVER CAPE TOWN PORT CALL SUMMARY - PUBLIC RELATIONS HANDLING OF CAPE TOWN PORT
TAGS: PFOR, SF, UK
To: DAR ES SALAAM
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005